

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /053 W
-----080590 182327Z /75

O R 182210Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8831
INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 QUITO 4965

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: ELECTION RESULT FAIRLY WIDELY ACCEPTED

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. REACTIONS TO THE ELECTION RESULT, WHICH CATAPULTED JAIME ROLDOS INTO THE FAVORITE'S ROLE FOR PRESIDENT, HAVE BEEN POSITIVE REGARDING THE WAY THE ELECTION WAS CONDUCTED AND FAIRLY EQUANIMOUS REGARDING A POSSIBLE ROLDOS PRESIDENCY. THE POLITICAL LOSERS APPEAR TO HAVE GIVEN IN GRACEFULLY, ALTHOUGH A MEMBER OF DURAN BALLEEN'S COALITION HAS FIRED THE OPENING SHOT OF THE SECOND ROUND BY CHARGING THAT ROLDOS' COALITION PARTNERS ARE "COMMUNISTIC". BUSINESSES HAVE PRIVATELY EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE ECONOMIC ATTITUDES OF A PROBABLE ROLDOS GOVERNMENT. EMBASSY BELIEVES ON THE EVIDENCE THAT SUCH CONCERNS ARE PROBABLY UNWARRANTED. END SUMMARY.

2. A MOOD OF SELF-CONGRATULATION AND SUBDUED EUPHORIA, TINGED WITH SOME CONCERN ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE PUTATIVE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT, REIGNS HERE 48 HOURS AFTER THE POLLS
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HAVE CLOSED. THE FACT THAT THE POLLING AND THE COUNTING, WHILE NOT WITHOUT DEFECTS, WAS HONEST AND ABOVE BOARD, SEEMED PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO ECUADOREANS FOLLOWING THE UNHAPPY REPORTS OF THE BOLIVIAN ELECTIONS THROUGHOUT THE PAST WEEK. ECUADOR OBVIOUSLY FEELS THAT THE ELECTION HAS PLACED THEM ON AN ETHICAL PLANE ABOVE THAT OF SOME OF THEIR NEIGHBORS TO THE SOUTH.

3. THE ROLDOS VICTORY ITSELF WAS SEEN BY MANY WHO WERE NOT NECESSARILY HIS SUPPORTERS AS FIRM EVIDENCE OF THE PURITY OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. THEY REASON THAT HE WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO WIN HAD THE ELECTIONS BEEN FIXED. THERE IS GENERAL EXPECTATION THAT ROLDOS' WILL EASILY WIN THE SECOND ROUND AND BE INSTALLED AS PRESIDENT BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR.

4. THE NEWSPAPERS, NONE OF WHICH SUPPORTED ROLDOS, HAVE PLAYED HIS FIRST-ROUND VICTORY STRAIGHT IN THEIR NEWS COLUMNS. HEADLINES, PHOTOS, AND FEATURE STORIES HAVE ALL FOCUSED ON ROLDOS AS THE MAN OF THE HOUR. HOWEVER, COMMENTARY, ESPECIALLY EDITORIAL COMMENT ABOUT THE RESULTS THEMSELVES AS OPPOSED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE ELECTORAL MECHANISM HAS BEEN RATHER SPARSE, PERHAPS UNDERSTANDABLY SO IN VIEW OF THE DEFEAT SUFFERED BY THEIR FAVORITES. THOSE WHO HAVE COMMENTED THUS FAR SUGGEST THAT ROLDOS' VICTORY WAS A TRIUMPH OF YOUTH AND OPPOSITION TO THE MILITARY REGIME. A FEW HAVE LAUDED ROLDOS' ORATORICAL GIFTS AND COMMENTED ON HIS "LATE BLOOMING CHARISMA" WHICH MAY HAVE GARNERED MORE VOTES IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS THAN BUCARAM WOULD HAVE. GUAYAQUIL'S EL TELEGRAFO, WHICH SUPPORTED HUERTA AND WHICH IS INTENSELY ANTI-CFP, WAS THE ONLY ORGAN WHICH PLAYED THE THEME THAT THE BATTLE WAS NOT YET LOST.
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5. THE POLITICAL LOSERS SEEMED TO ACCEPT THEIR FATE FOR THE MOST PART. RODRIGO BORJA SAID THAT DEMOCRATIC LEFT HAD LOST THE BATTLE, BUT ITS FIGHT WAS LONG RANGE, AND IT HAD NOT LOST THE WAR. ALTHOUGH DEMOCRATIC LEFT HAS BEEN EXCLUSIVIST ALMOST TO A FAULT, BOTH BORJA AND PARTY DIRECTOR GONZALO CORDOVA INDICATED IN TELEVISION INTERVIEWS THAT DEMOCRATIC LEFT MIGHT ENDORSE ROLDOS ON THE SECOND ROUND. RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA CREDITED ROLDOS' SHOWING TO YOUTH, DESCRIBING IT AS THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW POLITICAL GENERATION. HOWEVER, THE LIBERALS, WHOSE LEADERSHIP WILL PROBABLY BE REASSUMED BY ERSTWHILE CANDIDATE FRANCISCO (PANCHO) HUERTA THIS WEEK, ARE PLAYING THEIR SECOND ROUND STRATEGY CLOSE TO THE VEST. ABDON CALDERON TERMED THE ELECTIONS A DEMONSTRATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC WILL OF THE PEOPLE, WHILE HIS VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE EDGAR MOLINA STATED THAT THE RADICAL ALFARIST FRONT (FRA) WAS CLOSER IN SPIRIT TO ROLDOS FOR THE SECOND ROUND. COMMUNIST CANDIDATE RENE MAUGE ALSO SPOKE OF THE CONFIRMATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC WILL OF THE PEOPLE AND NOTED THAT THERE WERE GOOD PROSPECTS FOR HIS POLITICAL POSITION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 QUITO 4965

6. IT WAS UP TO EX-PRESIDENT OTTO AROSEMENA'S CID, PART OF THE SIXTO DURAN COALITION, TO FIRE THE OPENING SHOT OF THE SECOND ROUND. TURNING AWAY FROM THE USUAL ANTI-ROLDOS ARGUMENT THAT ROLDOS WAS NOTING BUT BUCARAM'S STAND-IN, CID PARTY SPOKESMAN HEINZ MOELLER FREILE CONCENTRATED FIRE ON ROLDOS' POPULAR DEMOCRACY PARTNERS. HE OBSERVED THE "COMMUNISTIC INFILTRATION OF THE ROLDOS TICKET (BY POPULAR DEMOCRACY) WHICH CONSTITUTES THE GREATEST DANGER EVER FACED BY ECUADOREAN DEMOCRACY". HE WARNED THAT THE "SOCIALISTIC AND STATIST" PHILOSOPHY OF POPULAR DEMOCRACY SOUGHT TO REPEAT THE ALLENDE EXPERIMENT IN ECUADOR.

7. ALTHOUGH HARDLY ALARMED AS THE CID DPOKESMAN, LOCAL BUSINESS CIRCLES HAVE DISPLAYED SOME PRIVATE CONCERN ABOUT THE DEGREE OF BUCARAM'S INFLUENCE IN THE PROBABLY NEW GOVERNMENT AND ABOUT THE ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY WHICH WILL INFORM IT. FORDEIGN BUSIFESSMEN ALSO THHOUGHT THAT THEY DENOTED SOME ECONOMIC JINGOISM IN THE ROLDOS-HURTADO CAMPAIGNING.

8. COMMENT: ROLDOS IS COMMONLY VIEWED AS REPRESENTING CHANGE:
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CHANGE FROM THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT, CHANGE IN GENERATION, CHANGE FROM THE USUAL CONSTITUENCY WHICH HAS BACKED WINNING PRESIDENTS, AND PERHAPS CHANGE IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SPHERE. NOBODY IS QUITE SURE WHAT THE LAST MEANS AND HENCE A CERTAIN RESTIVENESS IN BUSINESS CIRCLES WHICH, AT A MINIMUM, DETESTS UNCERTAINTY. ROLDOS WAS CONSCIOUS THROUGHOUT HIS CAMPAIGN OF THE INCIPIENT PANIC AMONG THE MIDDLE CLASSES AT THE POSSIBILITY OF HIS PRESIDENCY AND TOOK SPECIAL CARE IN HIS SPEECHES AND PUBLICITY TO UNDERLINE HIS RESPECT FOR PRIVATE PROPERTY AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT. ALTHOUGH OUR FUTURE REPORTING WILL MORE CLOSELY EXAMINE THESE ASPECTS OF HIS PLATFORM, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO VIEW ROLDOS OR BUCARAM OR HURTADO OR THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES AS ROMANTIC REVOLUTIONARIES. BOTH ROLDOS AND BUCARAM ARE POPULISTS WHO HAVE REPEATEDLY PROCLAIMED THEIR FAITH IN MARKET ECONOMY AS THE MOST APPROPRIATE SYSTEM FOR ECUADOR, BUT ONLY IF IT CAN BE MADE TO WORK FOR THE UNDERCLASSES AS WELL THROUGH THE ELIMINATION OF SPECIAL PRIVILEGES (WHICH, NEEDLESS TO SAY, ABOUND IN ECUADOR). HURTADO IS A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT WHO ON THE BASIS OF HIS WRITINGS, STATEMENTS, AND CONVERSATIONS WE WOULD PLACE AMONG THE PRAGMATIC GRADUALISTS OF THAT MOVEMENT AND NOT ON THE WOOLY-MINDED LEFT. THEIR ABILITY TO ALLAY THE VAGUE FEARS OF THE MIDDLE-CLASS ON THIS SCORE WAS DEMONSTRATED RATHER WELL IN THE FIRST ROUND OF THE CAMPAIGN. THEIR CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE POWER AND MAINTAIN IT MAY WELL DEPEND ON THEIR CONTINUED ABILITY TO DO SO.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978QUITO04965
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780295-0550
Format: TEL
From: QUITO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780748/aaaabnyg.tel
Line Count: 199
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6e295171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1970066
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ELECTION RESULT FAIRLY WIDELY ACCEPTED
TAGS: PINT, EC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6e295171-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014